

Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project INVASIVES

Introduction

Invasive weed sites are known to occur in the Lostine Project area.

This report has two primary purposes:

1. To disclose the effects of the proposed action on the risks of spreading invasive weeds and the efficacy of mitigations measures.
2. To determine whether the proposed actions are consistent with Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Plan direction and the Lostine River Wild and Scenic River Management Plan.

Proposed Action

The primary purpose and need of this project is to address the public safety issues in the corridor. Secondly, the project will address risks to the other values in the corridor including infrastructure (homes, cabins, recreation improvements, roads), the natural resource values. To reduce risks to these values the Forest Service is proposing the following within the project area boundary (approx. 2,110 acres):

- Removing hazard trees along travel routes and adjacent to residential, recreation, historic and improvements (addressing immediate hazards to people and infrastructure).
- Thinning stand densities to decrease severity of wildfire and to improve forest resiliency (addressing both risks to ingress and egress in the corridor in the event of wildfire, and risk of insect and disease impacts over the long term).
- Removing fuels (surface fuels, ladder fuels, and small woody debris) throughout the corridor, particularly in the wildland urban interface.
- Creating small (less than 2 acre) gaps/openings in lodge pole stands to break up continuous fuels so fire could be managed more effectively.

The project will also assess opportunities to provide wood products for local markets, including firewood, through implementation.

Existing Condition and Environmental Consequences

The below table 1 reflects seven factors and both the current condition and anticipated effects if the proposed actions are implemented and efficacy of mitigations.

Table 1. Reflects 7 factors and both the current condition and anticipated effects if the proposed actions are implemented and efficacy of mitigations.

Factors	Current Condition	Effects of project activities and mitigations
A. Inventory	<p>*"T" Classified noxious weeds (Meadow hawkweed, Meadow knapweed, and Spotted knapweed). Infestations of "Target" weeds are subject to eradication or intensive control when and where found.</p> <p>*"B" Classified noxious weeds (Canada thistle). Limited to intensive control at the landownership level as determined on a site specific, case-by-case basis. Where implementation of a fully integrated county wide management plan is not feasible, biological control (when available) shall be the primary control method.</p> <p>*Continued existence of species along the roadside as well as introduction of new species due to recreation traffic accessing trailheads and campsites.</p> <p>*Currently have 107 infested acres within the Lostine River Corridor</p>	Continued existence of species found along the roads and within project areas is likely. Risk to new species introductions is higher with implementation of the project, but can be lowered through project mitigations.
B. Habitat vulnerability	Habitats most vulnerable include riparian areas where there are sensitive plant species, recreation sites where there is activity and ground disturbance, and roadsides.	Increased risk to roadsides with more traffic from project and road improvements. High risk to introducing weed species into areas free of noxious weeds. This will include landing, slashpile, skid trail, and temporary road areas.
C. Non-project dependent vectors	Noxious weeds will continue to be introduced and spread by way of roads, trails, wildlife, wind, water, and recreational activities.	Low risk due to wildlife, wind, and water. Increased risk with traffic along roads.
D. Habitat alteration expected as a result of the project	If left untreated, habitats affected would be altered at a slower pace without disturbances from activities. Decrease species diversity, reduce quality of forage for wildlife, and Invasion of riparian areas.	Habitats are at a higher risk due to disturbance. Disturbances (fire, thinning, etc.) create habitat for noxious weeds to invade. The removal of vegetation = removal of competition. The increased light by removing overstory will create higher germination rates of noxious weeds.

Factors	Current Condition	Effects of project activities and mitigations
E. Increased vectors as a result of project implementation	If left untreated, vectors will stay the same without project implementation.	Increased risk for vectors with introducing more activity than what is already current in the Lostine corridor. This includes the creation of temporary roads. Also included would be the added impacts of public fuelwood gathering. More vehicles than normal would be entering the area.
F. Mitigation measures	If no mitigation measures implemented	High
	If some mitigation measures implemented	Moderate
	If all mitigation measures implemented	Moderate - there will be no low risk to noxious weed invasion because disturbance is what introduces, creates and expands weed habitat and sites.
G. Anticipated invasive plant response to proposed action	Noxious weeds currently present and spreading along roadside, unconnected to proposed project.	The risk for continued spread of high priority noxious weeds due to this project is moderately high. The risk for noxious weeds continuing to spread without this project is moderate since it is a high recreation corridor with existing weeds along the roadsides. Introducing more activity into this area increases the risk of introduction and spread, but can be reduced through mitigations. Therefore; the risk will remain moderate.

Consistencies

Based on the information documented in this report, the proposed actions under the Lostine Project are found to be consistent with Forest Plan as amended by the Lostine Wild and Scenic River Plan.